

**Subject:** Please Include Hood Canal

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**To:** "orcahabitat.nwr@noaa.gov" <orcahabitat.nwr@noaa.gov>

Dear NOAA,

All Puget Sound waters need to be designated as critical habitat for the recovery of Southern resident orcas. Most importantly, all of Hood Canal should be included. We know that resident orcas have used Hood Canal as a habitat until very recently and sightings have been confirmed within the past 10 years.

The Hood Canal Coalition is a grassroots citizens group, with over 2600 members, dedicated to preventing the industrialization of Hood Canal. A huge industrial harbor complex is already being proposed with massive strip mining within the Hood Canal watershed. An 1100 foot long, nine story tall, pier would be built just a mile north of Thorndyke Bay. Ships the size of British, Italian, and Spanish aircraft carriers would enter the canal thru the Hood Canal bridge to be filled with 60,000 tons of gravel. Brages 400 feet long and tug boats would routinely enter the industrial harbor to be filled with 20,000 tons of gravel. The combination of strip mining impacts, industrial harbor pollution, and heavy marine traffic would be devastating to the ecological future of Hood Canal and seriously threaten any potential return of resident orcas to this part of their historical habitat.

For those reasons and others, more than 60 independent organizations have joined in our defense of the canal and in opposition of the so called "pit to pier" project proposed by Fred Hill Materials of Poulsbo, Washington. Virtually every environmental organization in Washington opposes. For further information, see [www.hoodcanalcoalition.org](http://www.hoodcanalcoalition.org).

The canal is already teetering on the edge of ecological collapse. Efforts are underway to attack the low oxygen problem, but further protection is required. If we are to save it, we will need to protect it from massive industrialization. That may also provide the only secure habitat for resident orcas. If we restore the health of Hood Canal, and reestablish a salmon-friendly environment, the orca will return. Industrial harbors and resident orcas, however, can not co-exist in Hood Canal.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important national issue.

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Sincerely

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